



Corporate Report

NO: R020

COUNCIL DATE: January 30, 2006

REGULAR

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: January 19, 2006
FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture FILE: 1850-01
SUBJECT: Cultural Capitals of Canada

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Direct staff to prepare a Cultural Capitals of Canada submission for the 2008 award designation and apply for the maximum of \$2 million in Federal funding under this Program.
2. Provide approval in principal for including municipal matching contributions of up to \$667,000 in total in the 2007 and 2008 sections of the Five Year Financial Plan, upon confirmation that Surrey has been approved for the federal Cultural Capitals of Canada award.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to:

- Present information to Council regarding the Cultural Capitals of Canada Program;
- Seek Council approval to submit an application by the March 15, 2006, deadline for the 2008 competition;
- Seek Council approval in principal for the required Municipal funding contribution.

BACKGROUND

In May, 2002, the Cultural Capitals of Canada Program was established by the Government of Canada. The Department of Canadian Heritage has announced a series of application dates for this Program and has also increased the level of funding available to the winning communities. Each year, up to five (5) Canadian cities can receive the

Cultural Capitals of Canada designation. Surrey qualifies as a Level 1 community with a population of over 125,000. The financial award for this category is 75% of total eligible costs up to a maximum of \$2,000,000. Under this formula, Surrey would need to contribute a maximum of \$667,000 if the maximum award amount is received. These funds can come from the City and/or from private or other government partners. The municipal contribution must be for new or expanded activities. Regular municipal budget amounts for ongoing cultural activities are not eligible under this Program. Applications for the 2008 designation are due by March 15, 2006. Following this date, there is a six (6) month evaluation period and the City could expect an announcement in October 2006.

The objective of this Program is to promote the arts and culture in Canadian municipalities, through recognition of excellence and support for special activities that celebrate the arts and culture and integrate them into overall community planning. This designation enables communities to invest more in arts and culture, increasing and improving their cultural services and strengthening connections with other communities through shared cultural experiences.

To date, the winning communities in the Level 1 category have been Vancouver (2003), Regina (2004), Toronto (2005) and Saskatoon (2006). Successful British Columbia recipients in other levels include; Kelowna and Powell River (2004), Victoria (2005) and most recently, West Vancouver (2006). Each successful community has outlined a unique proposal of arts and cultural events that reflects the demographic and cultural strengths of their community. Vancouver's plan included an awards program for emerging and First Nations artists, a waterfront festival, cultural diversity celebrations, more public art and the promotion of studio and backstage tours. Many communities have featured the celebration of significant anniversaries in their winning submissions.

DISCUSSION

Council has demonstrated a strong desire to revitalize City Centre, enhance the social well-being of its residents and promote a positive City image. Arts-based community initiatives have proven to be a successful model for building community pride, promoting cultural sharing and strengthening community networks and partnerships. Creative expression is an essential component of early childhood development and Surrey has a very large and diverse child and youth population. A Cultural Capitals of Canada award would assist greatly in advancing Surrey's cultural development in all sectors.

Cultural Capitals of Canada awards meritorious municipalities on the basis of their ongoing commitment to culture and cultural development, as well as the calibre of their proposed celebratory and legacy building activities planned for the designated year. The City of Surrey has demonstrated an on-going commitment to arts and culture. Some recent examples of Surrey's leadership in arts and culture are: the development and implementation of a Cultural Strategic Plan; the implementation of a Public Art Program; the expansion and renovations to the Surrey Arts Centre; the hosting of the BC Festival of the Arts; the funding of the Surrey Children's Festival; annual Canada Day celebrations; the First Night event; and building the new Surrey Museum. The community response to these initiatives has been very positive and growth in

participation in arts and heritage activities has been significant. Surrey embraces the concept of cultural sharing, with examples of this including the Gaden Jangste Monks artist in residency, numerous art exhibitions by South Asian and First Nations artists and the themed programming of the Children's Festival, "exploring the world in your own backyard". Therefore, we will be able to make a strong case for the City's on-going commitment to cultural development.

The Cultural Capitals Program requires that we submit a proposal that contains a minimum of two celebratory activities and one legacy building activity. Staff research has determined that communities that have previously won in the award category of \$500,000, have submitted seven to nine initiatives in their applications. With the government announcement in 2005 that the Cultural Capitals cash award was being significantly increased, Surrey would need to put forward a realistic plan with numerous unique elements. Based upon past work with the community and three recent community workshops, staff is formulating an interesting short list of celebratory and legacy building activities.

CONCLUSION

The cultural community in Surrey is truly coming of age. In 2005, the Arts Council of Surrey celebrated their 40th Anniversary; the Surrey Art Gallery their 30th Anniversary; and this year, the Surrey Festival of Dance celebrates their 40th Anniversary. The Spirit of Youth murals are beautiful features in our City, and historic storyboards educate residents and visitors about our past. The growth and success of the Surrey International Writer's Conference is another example of the rich cultural life that has been nurtured in our community. Staff has met with community leaders to identify a strong program of cultural activities. With Council's support we will continue to work to prepare a successful submission to the Cultural Capitals of Canada Program.

Staff are seeking Council approval to submit an application for this award, and also require a resolution from Council to support in principle the inclusion of \$667,000 in contributory funding spread over the 2007 and 2008 budget years of the Five-Year Financial Plan.



Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation and Culture

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cc - General Manager, Finance, Technology and Human Resources